

Justice for First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples

NDP **BACKGROUNDER**

This year, First Nations communities in Canada and all Canadians shared a historic moment when Parliament apologized for the tragic legacy of Indian Residential Schools. This first step needs to be followed up by action to address the social and economic inequalities that our First Nations communities face—but Stephen Harper has refused to move forward.

First Nations, Métis and Inuit people make prominent contributions to this country, but far too many grow up in third world conditions that keep them from realizing their full potential. Unclean drinking water. Crumbling schools and homes. Inadequate health care. Real despair. Today, one in four First Nations children lives in poverty and suicide is one of the leading causes of death among youth—five times higher than the national rate.

It doesn't have to be this way. But like so many previous Prime Ministers, Stephen Harper can't be trusted to keep his commitments to First Nations, Métis and Inuit people. Instead of looking for solutions, he has ignored problems and slashed funding.

To move towards equality, it's time for more than just words. It's time for a Prime Minister with the will to make change happen.

Jack Layton will be that Prime Minister.

Don't let them tell you it can't be done!

**Jack
Layton**
NDP



Stephen Harper can't be trusted.

- He ignored communities in need: refused to fund Attawapiskat's grade school, leaving students to face eight more years in cold portables; and refused to relocate the community of Kashechewan even after residents had to evacuate four times in four years due to water contamination.
- Instead of investing, he cut per-student funding to the First Nations Technical Institute by two-thirds—and cut \$105 million from Canadian Heritage programs that support the preservation of Aboriginal languages.
- From day one, he ignored the 2005 Kelowna agreement to invest \$5-billion over five years in better education, safe housing, infrastructure and decent health care.

Stephane Dion is not the change we need.

- By instructing his Liberals to skip key votes, he rubber-stamped Harper's plans to squander \$50-billion on corporate tax cuts—instead of investing responsibly to improve the quality of life of First Nations people.
- With Dion in cabinet, it was the Liberals who imposed the 2% spending cap on core services that has made it so difficult for First Nations communities to meet the needs of their growing populations. That's not the change we need.

Jack Layton's New Democrats: Honouring our obligations.

This election, Jack Layton and his team of New Democrats have a plan to address the issues faced by First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities.

Already, Layton's team has led the way in Parliament:

- Successfully passed a motion enshrining "**Jordan's Principle,**" which ensures that First Nations children will no longer be denied access to medical care and other essential services while governments bicker over who should pay the bills.
- Successfully passed a motion to have Parliament endorse the **UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**—after the Prime Minister refused to sign on Canada's behalf.
- Pushed Prime Minister Harper to issue the historic **national apology** in Parliament to the survivors of Indian Residential Schools.
- Worked closely with students in **Attawapiskat** on a national campaign to fight for urgently needed funding for their grade school.
- Introduced a motion to establish a **National Aboriginal History Month.**
- When Jack Layton rewrote the 2005 Liberal budget, cancelling billions in corporate tax giveaways, the new investments he secured included \$300-million to help meet immediate **housing needs** for First Nations communities in Canada living off-reserve.